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AUTHOR ROTH, AUDREY J.
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THE TRANSCRIBED TEXT OF A PRE-CONVENTION NATICNAI CCUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (NCIE) WORKSHOP AS RECORDED ON TAPE CCNTAINS REMARKS OF BOTH NEGRO AND CAUCASIAN DISCUSSANTS ON RELEVANCY IN THE JUNIOR COLLEGE CURRICULUM. INITIAL DISCUSSION CENTERS ON THE YOUTH CRISIS, IDENTITY, STUDENT DEMCNSTRATIONS, AND "ESTABLISHMENT" VALUES. BIACK STUDIES AND NEGRC ASPIRATIONS ARE VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL EXAMPLES. LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS, GHETTOS, AND INTEGRATICN ARE AISC MENTIONED, REVEALING UNDERCURRENTS OF THOUGHI RELATED TO EDUCATICNAL SYSTEMS. NOT AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY DUE TC MARGINAI IEGIBILITY CF ORIGINAL IOCUMENT. (RL)

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TRANSCRIPTION OF

TAPES MADE AT NCTE PRE-CONVENTION

WORKSHOP ON JUNIOR COLLEGE ENGLISH

MILWAUKEE, November 1968

Participants recorded on transcript:

Elliot Evans

Greg Cowan

Dick Williamson

Leo Neifer

Harry Shefter

Martin Cohen

Joe King

Prepared by Audrey J. Roth
Miami-Dade Junior Col

TE 500 607

ELLIOTT: ...the kind of instructional program that is more relevant to their needs and their interest. We have to determine just what that relevance consists of and further ~~what league~~ are we sufficiently attuned to their thinking or to offer these programs. In my presentation on Black Literature the other day, I thought the answer was very simple; that the black students had specifically said, well, "We want more black rioters, we want to see black people represented in literature and terror." With the white students demanding changes, I think that is really very clear in my mind. I think I know what he wants. I think that we might start at the point of departure. Other problems have been raised with the presentation on the compensatory education program this morning. One of the questions I might raise-is this kind of program really relevant in a changing society? I think it's excellent that teachers involved take students out to field trips, etc., and Morris made the point that the students could not adjust to this because they had been accustomed to the idea that education was in some way suffering (and by suffering I think most people perhaps meant must be skilled in terror,), I wonder if the field trip was not merely a <u>new</u> kind of suffering. I wonder if it, too, didn't in a sense challenge, conceivably degrade (if we take one little girl's comments seriously) those students involved. So I think that maybe as a beginning point we should determine what is relevant--or what we mean by relevant--(I don't think that's been cleared up in three days) and then can we make this material relevant. Are we capable of doing this thing because I think doing this kind of thing involves more than mere academic research. I think it involves being sensitized in some kind of way to the changes that are going on around you. I think it involves being able to empathize with these young people and I think this is where we have to start.

GREG: Go ahead.

PARTICIPANT: I think that another significant question is: who is to decide what is relevant. Elliott mentioned the other day, I think in the discussion black literature, I think, that if these kids feel that the education they're getting is not relevant then they, therefore, have the right or perhaps the obligation, to take over the school

or the dean's office or what have you. And I just wonder whether the kids themselves are always ready to decide what is relevant or what is significant to them. Coulda't it be for example, that something they're learning about today, or this and that or next week or next year that they feel is not particularly significant, might turn out to be significant later on. And couldn't, in fact, the result be that these kids might be cheating themselves in a sense of some the tools that they will need to survive in the world in which we live?

DICK: I'd like to speak if I may for the revolutionary student because we have on our campus had a serious problem Greg mentioned the other day; that the president's office was bombed last week and that's only the culmination of a whole series of problems that we've had. I think my feeling is that they <u>do</u> know what they want and they do have authority in making these demands, just as you know what you want when you go to a library and thumb through some books until you find the one that you like. I think they know what they want. I think they feel--in fact I <u>know</u> they feel--that our society has failed, that it's a complete flop. I don't mean to sound like a bomb-throwing, wild-eyed radical myself. I'm going to sound that way. But it's because I understand these kids and they think that our value system is completely corrupt, completely hypocritical and they want to have no part of it. They're not interested in going to school in order to get better jobs. They don't <u>care</u> about the job system that we have. They're going to school because they think that an educational institution should make them better human beings and once they're better human beings they're going to find their own way of getting through life, and they're not going to join an organization, an establishment that <u>they</u> feel acutually imprisons them and takes away their humanity. We can dismiss them, I think, and say "Well, this is just childish rebellion." But if we dismiss them, we dismiss them at our own peril. The bombs that were thrown on our campus, the teacher who was dragged from her classroom last week and threatened with a gun at her head, all of the chaos, the invasion of the administration building and the confrontation with the police, the ensuing faculty meetings (for two days the college was closed while we met in a plenary session of the faculty senate which erupted into something that was very reminiscent of the French national

assembly from time to time, fisticuffs, a complete crumbling of any kind of order within the authoritarian segment of our campus)-all of this is the result of the students very eloquently pleading for our help. And these people I do not think are revoltionaries. I don't think they're interested in destruction. They have reached the last resort. We talk around here about communication and about non-verbal communication. This is that last means they have of saying to us "Will you please help us? instead of simply forcing us into a position we've been in so long that takes away part of our humanity."

I think what I'm saying is that they are demanding that we, too, question values and question the purpose of education and question the purpose of education and question the purpose of the junior college in particular.

I've accumulated here a great number of notes

on things that I would like to tell you about that are occurring in various parts of the country, but I don't want to dominate the discussion. But there are educators who feel as I do that we have copped out, that we are spending our time at this conference, for example, talking about trivia, that it doesn't matter what you do in transfer English or what you do in remedial English. These terms mean absolutely nothing to these students and I think if we're going to get at this problem then we have to talk about-maybe-what the purpose of the Junior College is and is it doing what it ought to do and is it structured the way it ought to be....and is it doing what it ought to do and is it structured as it ought to be to meet the needs of the people,--those people who we let in through our open door.

That's enough to bring a pall down on the entire group.

What would you suggest or what have the students themselves suggested ? What do they want in place of whatever we have now. What is it?

GREG: May I answer a piece of that. We talk humanizing. But how? Frank Urbanowski handed me this--the Glencoe man who hosted a cocktail party for us Monday night. This is a memo to students, faculty, administration, and Chabot community from the black student union Chabot College in California. Subject; development of a black curriculum and AA degree major in Afro-American Studies.

it. I wish I had facilities to reproduce it. I wish Frank would give it to me, but he wants it back. But let me just read a couple of paragraphs. We the black students at Chabot want a share of the pie called Chabot College. This is supposed to be a community college, but it isn't a true community college because it is neglecting the self-determined needs of nearly all the black students of the community. We, the black student union, are going to see to it that Chabot College becomes a representative community college by the institution of an inter-departmental, inter-disciplinary, multi-track curriculum (that all sounds administrative and elegant, doesn't it?) culminating with an AA degree, with a major in Afro-american studies.

It is the black student union recommendation, the black person develop, coordinate and articulate the program the program. The black person is needed because whites seemingly operate out of the needs of fear or, worse yet, duty, without love or commitment. We want someone dedicated to the uplifting of black consciousness to articulate and convey our message for us. Chabot College stands at the crossroads where it must choose between being a truly great, representative community college or remaining a perpetuation of 'Negro' second class citizens. (The word Negro whenever it appears on this paper is in quote marks.) Black students at Chabot will not wait any longer or listen to age old lies told by white America any longer. We feel that our survival as an ethnic group is at stake and we must change the educational institutions of this country by any means necessary if we are to enjoy the fruits of human dignity.

That's that page. There's some more.

I couldn't help but think while Morris was showing us the movies of the Indians. One question is, "How many Indians are there in Chicago?" The other question is, "How do you know they're Indians?" And the other question is, "Where are the rest of the Indians?" It's a fair question, I think. Here is the crux of the thing. By the way, this ends in a full page recommendation of black curriculum for the AA degree in Afro-American Studies.

Anyone familiar with behavioral psychology will readily see that black students are responding to stimuli (spelled ...but still eloquent,) rated by the white society. Uncle Tomism, tokenism, be whiteism and all other self destructive "isms" have gotten

black students nothing. Watts 1965, Hunter's Point 1960, and all the other 29 to 30 some-odd riots across the nation in the past three years have conditioned the black students to one factor. You will listen to us if we raise enough hell (and we raise enough hell is in all caps and underlined). The black student is determined to get people at Chabot aware of black consciousness by any means necessary. The black student union is determined to create new channels of communication if your channels of communication and action are clogged. The whole thing is fine as that. Page 6 catalogue heading, "Anthropology."Course title " Black Anthropology;" Art--Study of Afro-American Art; Art--Afro-American painting, drawing, sculpture; Drama, Introduction to Black drama; Economics--current economic problems of Afro-Americans; English--Black perspectives of composition and communication; English--Afro-American Literature; English--Study of Black novels, poetry, prose; Foreign Languages--contemporary African languages; History--Afro-American history; History--United States history from black perspective; music--survey and history of Afro-American; Music--Introduction to Jazz; Physical Education--contemporary Afro-American dance techniques; Political Science-American government from a black perspective; Psychology-personal and social adjustments of Afro-Americans.

DICK: Greg, I'm going to charge you with parochialism. It may be a kind of racism, because I don't think this is a black and white problem.

GREG: I'm sure it's not. I didn't mean it to be.

DICK: The program on our campus, the dissension on our campus, was fomented by a coalition made up of a number of students belonging to different organizations. The Black Student Union was one. But the group who calls themselves WAR-THAT IS WHITES AGAINST RACISM, were another. The Brown Berets, a Spanish-American group, actually led the invasion of the administration building. And the Associated Students themselves were in this as opposing the faculty and the administration, and all of them were saying the same thing : that we have failed to give them what they want and what they need. And it's not simply black students at all.

GREG: Thank you very much, I didn't mean to imply that it was. I'm just offering as a nicely written document in concrete substantiation of which were saying one

DICK: But it's a bigger problem and I think that if we recognize that and recognize that this has to do, it's just as appropriate to the college of DuPage in Illinois where there are no black students. This is just as crucial to that college and to Mason City Junior College in Iowa as it is to the college of San Mateo because the college of San Mateo to begin with was not a..... had no black students. We imported them about the time of the Watts riots. We actually paid them a wage to come to school and they increased their wage by getting good grades. We brought in 40 students from a community near Stanford, a community called East Palo Alto. The residents of East Palo Alto in the last election tried to change the name of the town to Nairobi, but the un-imaginative white citizens voted this down.

We brought them in from the Fillmore district in San Francisco. We brought them from as far [away] as Plainview, Texas or Prairieview, Texas, and from Chicago. We had a grant from Stanford University in order to pay 40 students to come into this lily white, upper-middle-class, wealthy community college, with its reflection pools and fountains. A county that is extremely conservative, extremely wealthy, extremely professional. People are doctors, lawyers and that kind of thing. It's the county Shirley Temple Black ran for congress for, example, and which supported, the only Northern California County which overwhelmingly voted for Ronald Reagan. It was that kind of community, and we imported 40 ghetto students. Negroes who have had no education. And we paid them to stay in school that one semester hoping that if it worked and they came back the second semester that we might start something and we could send them out as missionaries to bring more there. It worked. In two years the enrollment in what we call the Readiness [went] from 40 students to 700. And our problems began this semester when we ran out of money. It's a very costly thing. The way the program works is that each of these students has a personal tutor. That tutor is paid. In addition, because these students have no regular homes, we feed them, we hous them, we bus them to the campus if they come from San Francisco we bus them there or if they come from Nairobi we bus them from there. We make sure that they have the means to continue their education and as you can see it's a very costly thing, particularly paying 700 or 800 tutors to work with these people and go to their classes with them

to help them with all of their homework, to help them adjust if you come from Prairieview, Texas to affluent at San Mateo county where all the students look like surfers and they all have cashmere sweaters, it's something of a shock. But we wanted to keep them there because we didn't want them on the street corners because if we had them on the street corners they would be bombing homes. I would rather they bombed the president's office in a eloquent plea to say, "Look, will you please help me?" than to have them out on the street corners bombing homes. We ran out of money. This isn't the problem that started all of this. And they felt, as we do, as the faculty does, that they have a right to be there and by God they must stay there and we must keep them there at all costs. The Associated Students joined in this coalition, this united front of rebellion, when, in an extraordinary session of the student council, they took their entire budget and gave it to the Readiness Center and said "Use this." It was something like $40,000 that was scheduled for transporting the football team to various games, or the debate team or putting on student plays. And the Associated Students first took the lead and gave their entire budget to the Readiness Center so it could continue a month or so longer. It took the faculty a lot longer to get around to converting part of its budget to the Readiness Center. The Readiness Center should have operation to full extent to the end of this semester. The problems confronting us in the future are even more enormous because we don't know where we're going to get the money and we want them to bring with them as many students as they can from wherever they can get them. The program can't be curtailed . It works. Those 40 students that began, only about 20 of them finished, unfortunately, but they've gone to the University at Berkeley, they've gone on to the University of Santa Cruz and they've gone on to the state colleges and it has worked.

I think one of the things I am pleading for this morning is that other colleges, particularly colleges in white communities consider such a program. If real choas is not going to occur, a real revolution. Don't think this is purely a black phenomenon . It is not. Anywhere there are young people they are feeling this and it is spreading, and I think all of you sooner or later are going to be confronted with these problems. I don't mean to dominate the whole thing but there are just a

couple of other things that I would like to say. I'm sure your questions are "Well, what can you do?" Our Readiness Center is only one solution and not a very good one, really, in some ways. The director of the Readiness Center , himself a black, non-credentialed, but someone who speaks the language of the street corner Negro told the faculty at the beginning of the semester....He said "Go to your conferences; have your faculty meetings; talk about trivia; talk about all these things about what you should be doing in remedial classes, should you be teaching grammar, and so on. You can talk about all those things but you're not getting at the problems of the students."

We have expanded the Readiness Center.....oh--he also told us that this is the center of these kids' lives. He said "This is their entire life." If you curtail that readiness center.....They live there, they eat there, it is <u>everything</u> to them. It is their last chance. If you curtail it, then you are directly responsible for bringing on bloodshed on the streets." Someone who goes a little further than that and a man whom Greg has mentioned, Dr. Wally Hometz who is the president of Laney College in Oakland, is someone you should all know. He's a man who has gone even further with this. His black students now say to him, "You are blacker than we are." He has joined this coalition against the faculty and against the the trustees. He's one of the students. He has some fantastic ideas about what a Junior College should be. It's not at all like the thing that we conceive of as we sit here in our sessions talking about tracking, etc. To use his term, he sees the Junior College as a"settlement house" . And through very clever financing, the students at Laney College in Oakland have purchased a 144 unit apartment house and they've practically abandoned their regular campus and this 144 unit apartment house has become the center of the campus. They live there; they eat there; they argue there; they probably smoke pot there; they do all kinds of things there-but it is a way of life. Hometz says that what goes on in the classroom is relatively immaterial. It's what goes on outside of the classroom that is important to these kids. The classroom has come to represent to them something totally alienated from the real world. You go to English three hours a week, and you talk about O'Henry and Shakespeare. But this has nothing to do with the problems of a human being in the second half of the 20th century who has been

deprived and who feels that he has got to have his voice in running things. Hometz has done such things as developing a tutorial program. When these kids come in(it's a real collective) when they come in and they move into the settlement house; they associate themselves with an instructor and that group remains a group for the whole time that they're there. There's no changing classes; there's no such thing as going from Biology at 10 o'clock to English at 2 in the afternoon. But you are there with your instructor. And all the things that are important to you, you work out together and you go out and you learn by doing. He has done away with D and F grades which has upset the university and as you can imagine--if a student is failing in the instructor's eyes he is withdrawn from the course and he not penalized for this, because these people have been penalized endlessly. So you don't penalize them for that, you give them A's, B's and C's. If they're failing you let them withdraw and let them try it again or let them do something else next semester... I'm trying to think of some of his other innovations. What I'm asking for is that you consider the junior college in a larger view and rather than thinking of it as a kind of medieval university, a kind of amputated medieval university, if it's going to what it must do-and that's educate great numbers of people so that the average education of everyone in the United States raised-then perhaps it has to be a totally different kind of institution from that which we know now. I've said enough.

GREG: And very well, too. It still gets back to how you do it; I think the philosophy is well expressed. I think everyone is very much aware of it. But when you get back to things now do we say reading, writing etc., is not important? When you get down to that thing, that's where they revolt too, because they say that isn't relevant. I can exist in this world without....

DICK: That's right. It's not relevant to the street corner Negro or to the street corner anyone. Incidentally, I meant to mention that our Readiness Program has now expanded. It's no longer simply for black students but we admit any kind of deprived student so that in this place,--curiously enough it's in a glass house and I'm sure many people who are more conservative say, well, these people in glass houses shouldn't throw bombs, you know. The horticulture didn't work at the College at San Mateo. It's

a very wealthy college, and we have vast green house and classroom building and we've turned it over to the Readiness Center. There are Mexican-American students there; there are many oriental students there, all brought in from San Francisco. There are many so-called Hippie students there-white students who have been deprived. To them-to these people-reading and writing is not relevant. And I know as English teachers this is what we should be concerned with. I think, maybe. Although I'm beginning to question that; I'm beginning to question if what English is or is it understanding language as it's used and encouraging people to use the language to its fullest potential. We talked about dialect here at this conference, for example. If you divest the street corner Negro of his dialect, what does he have left? You're taking away everything-the only thing he has not been deprived of, or the only thing that gives him a dignity. He has nothing else. He has nothing else. He has no hope for a job. Let him have his dialect but encourage him in that dialect to express himself, you know, movingly, jarringly, soothingly, or whatever we can. I think this is what we should be concerned with and not whether or not they're going to write an essay. They have no need ever to write an essay. And because they live in the kind of conditions they live in, they have no need to read either. This is a nicety. It's a luxury these people are not going to be able to afford for a long time-unless, what they read is somehow going to be relevant to the condition they find themselves in. But their language is extremely ~~righ~~ rich. It's much more metaphorical than mine, for example. It's extremely poetic. It's alliterative. It's rhythmic. It has all kinds of qualities that those of us who are English teachers supposedly encourage in language. This is, I think, what we should do. You say, how? I don't....[Section of tape garbled.] How, is the same question you're asking ? How do you help him if he is QUESTION: fired to get into the bag you've gotten into, where you can afford the luxury of saying, you don't have to learn this frustrating dialect....He didn't address himself to this question.

DICK: I work with these kids and the man who led the invasion of our administration building is a student of mine and a very articulate one. He's a Mexican-American, a brown student, member of the Ultra-revolutionary Brown Berets. I worked with them and I listen to them and you know what they would tell me. They would tell me that people like the man you're talking about and even people like Elliott Evans-they would call

them "niggers". They've sold out to the white establishment and they're saying we're not going to sell out to the white establishment. My language is me and I'm going to speak it.

That's what they're saying. That's what Bob Fairchild and Nathan Harris say.

DICK: They don't want any part of it. They don't want to join Elliott Evans and the men you're talking about. They say that these people have sold out. I don't happen to agree. But I understand why they say it. Isn't that right Elliot ?

ELLIOTT: Dick is absolutely right. I agree with you that it seems wierd that those of us who are black and who are educated would go before a group of black students and say "Things that you're demanding, the kind of permissiveness that wish in language is perfectly justifiable and we're behind you all 100%." And at the same time, we would choose to function within the established structure. I don't think that when I was coming to school I had much of an alternative. I was a product of the ghetto, myself. I think that at <u>that</u> time the social situation was quite different from what is is now. I had to go along with what existed if I was going to survive. I didn't have sufficient imagination to think in terms of rebelling against it. The civil rights movement or rather the black liberation, and there is a difference, was in vogue then and the problem was, how does one make ones self as white as possible while still being black. And you start with language. I got my who and whoms together and few.....expressions and I managed to survive. But even now I can be perfectly honest, that going before a group of black students outside of a classroom situation I wouldn't dare talk to them as I'm talking to you now. Because I would never get across to them. And they would never accept what I have to say. I was telling Dick the other day that I talked to the president of the student senate since I've been here because I wanted to keep him informed of what's going on - he's tremendously interested in all these issues and my wife was kidding me saying,"Well, I see you're coming out of your other bags now," because we had a fall and we both got down to this basic ghetto idiom kind of thing which I think basically I'd be more comfortable in. But I don't think that the black students going through college at this time are going to accept the same promises I accepted, I don't think he cares to accept the same values and I can tell you right now I think

those values are wrong, those I accepted. I think those promises I accepted are wrong because the thing that it did for me was make me no more than a frustrated individual. Here I was walking around with a college degree from prestige universities and thinking I was raising a whole lot of hell and yet when I met a cop on the street or when I attended a national convention or when I applied for a job, the first thing that people reminded me of (and to a certain degree even today, will remind me - immediately) that I'm black. Given a choice to live my life all over I imagine I would be out with the rest of the senate throwing bombs. I slowly think it has come to that kind of thing. I'd like to comment on a statement that this lady made, about the whole problem of reading. I wonder (and again this is not a question of black and white) I wonder if the emphasis that we've been putting on reading skills in 1968 is either realistic or relevant. I wonder if we place that kind of emphasis because it keeps us all secure. You see if there were no remedial programs, no composition courses, there wouldn't be any English Teachers and we would all be unemployed. We seem to fail to realize, In a course in contemporary literature, I asked a group of students to read Albee's play "Virginia Woolfe" and they couldn't read it, and the movie came out. I assigned the next class not to read the play but to see the movie and we had one of the best sessions we ever had. I didn't dream that those kids could get as much out of Albee as they have gotten.

The Vietnam crises is the same thing. Our students don't read a damn thing about Vietnam. They couldn't tell who are the spokesmen for the Hawks or the Doves, and I don't think they care. But if there's a special on Vietnam on television, they'll sit and watch it. And I wonder about the kind of snobbery that says you're an idiot because you waste - quote waste - two or three hours sitting before a television, is not just the kind of paranoia, just kind of self defense on the part of English teachers. I wonder if we should not begin to relate and not only for black students but for all students, begin to relate more to the other media. I wonder at times. I picture an ideal classroom really as one where there might not be one book. They would all be thrown out and we would bring in other media and we would still have the same experience that the student has with reading. We still will be discussing the same materials and we wouldn't burden

the person who is having difficulty with reading, sitting down to read a four or five hundred page book that may take two or three weeks for him. I think we simply are not giving these kids a chance and I think the reason that Dick can say that he doesn't know what we should do is that really what we are suggesting, whether we want to admit it or not, is a total revolution. We're not out throwing bombs but we're just as bad as those students who are out there throwing bombs, because we advocate the same thing that they're advocating. Because we're saying," The University as it's traditionally structured is no longer relevant." And we're saying," Let's start something new." And the problem is that no one has really, other than Homitz who is head of Laney, and a couple of other people, no one has never taken any meaningful, concrete steps toward doing this sort of thing.

Now Dick, I don't want to dominate this discussion, but . . . . .

WOMAN: What you say about taking a student and listening to him and trying to establish some kind of understanding and help him find himself, I buy this. Now, somewhere along the way, though, I don't see the objective a year from now. Are we putting him back in the ghetto? I mean are we going to let him understand himself so he can go back to the ghetto? Or do we . . . . is there something here that allows him to go somewhere else. Does he want to stay in the ghetto? Do we equip him to do something about it? Now in the T.V., for instance, I think we have to relate to the T.V. But if this is his only method of reception, when we're controlled by four channels, it seems that this is a very limited existence. What I want to know is how long do you work with people within a certain framework and then how do you move or <u>do</u> you move to something beyond this so that he becomes someone who can do something more than bomb? I mean, where he can establish a system.

DICK: The answer to your question I think at this moment in my thinking about all this is that "yes," he wants to go back to the ghetto. He sees integration is dead; he's no longer interested in integration at all. He is interested in segregating himself and developing a segregated community that is as flourishing, or even more flourishing and certainly more humane than the one that surrounds him. And then, if that's what he wants then he's not interested in the things that we traditionally give him. What possible

value is there in reading Hobbes if you're going to go back to a ghetto and clean it up and give it dignity and get the people off the street corners?

WOMAN: Well, maybe what I'm saying is," What skills does he need if he wants to go back to the ghetto?"

GREG: I'm awfully sorry Adam Casmier isn't here and that he didn't get to talk about the black program which is only one that I know of and it's not as exciting as the one you're proposing but it's kind of a step in between. It's an ed program funded for veterans. I told you briefly about this. But the guys who qualify usually haven't finished high school. They're usually ghetto guys, white or black, it doesn't matter at all. What they're given is 2½ years of what the guy who is running the program has bludgeoned the university into accepting, as an equivalency of a 4 year ed program. So at the end of 2½ years, these guys - very tough minded guys who have been studying in a program much like the one you described - that is to say all the instructors meet with them all day. There are about 35 guys in the group and we'll run a film and that film will then be the point of departure for talk about literature, for talk about sociology, for talk about psychology and everyone chips in. At the end of that time - much of whatever expense they have - and it's minimal - will be absolutely waived if they will go back for one year to the ghetto. And that year back also is funded and additional graduate study is funded. No effort is made to change the dialect, of whatever kind. Much effort is made to move toward precision rather than abstraction, toward concreteness rather than vagueness. But that is one kind of thing that can be done within a reasonable structure, that universities can be made to give their endorsement to and can redirect creative, vigorous, tough minded guys into rather wide sweeping, wide reaching reforms of a semi-conventional sort.

Q: I'm bothered by some of the words used in regard to dialect. You said no effort is made to change the dialect. And you said you saw no value in having to divest a student of his dialect and I've agreed with that. I think that the dialect has great resources for each person, But I think there's another position possible and that is that you can give the student standard English as another dialect, simply another dialect which he can

use when it's appropriate. This in no way impairs his ability to use his original dialect.

GREG: I don't think you can give it to him.

DICK: I don't either. I think he can pick it up if he wants it. Can you learn his? Can you learn his in two years? If you can't learn his, how do you expect him to learn yours, especially when he's not interested in learning yours?

Q: Well, here's the problem because I've been getting involved in the semantics of the word "dialect." When I say teaching standard English dialect to be used on appropriate occasions, I mean teach him to use the plural of nouns in writing when it's appropriate; teach him to use past tense verbs, past participles, etc. and that's possible. I wouldn't recommend changing his whole pronunciation patterns. I've seen that tried and that doesn't work. You can't teach him to pronounce final...

DICK: You can do as you say only if they see some reason for doing it, and at the moment they see no reason for doing these things. They don't give a damn about putting s's on plurals. It doesn't make any difference to them. This is your value, and you're saying it has a value. He doesn't see it and what we have to do first, then, is to teach him to <u>want</u> to change it.

GREG: But if he doesn't want to not to kick him out for that reason.

DICK: Yes. And if he doesn't want to and as far as I can see from these students they don't want to.

Q: I am always afraid of a number of things happening, for instance you just said "They don't want to." Let's not lump "them." What I see coming out of the discussion so far, there are two, really two groups we are talking about; those in college, those who are storming the doors of the administrative offices, and this other group who probably had no idea of ever getting an education. What you mentioned I don't think we can handle both the same way.

DICK: No.

Q: Not at all, and I had thought that the discussion was starting with those who are in college and making demands for changes. This is one issue which will take a few days. . . .

And this other one is what? Really a headstart for someone beyond headstart age who had nothing in the immediacy. I think we should keep this clearly in mind.

GREG: It's a nice distinction. Yes.

LEO: Now about relevance, Isn't it terrible that especially educators and English teachers get hung up on cliches the quickest of any group I think, in any society? I think as teachers, obviously what we do ought to be relevant. Now if a student's scope is small, and very little is relevant, then our immediate responsibility it seems to me is to make more things relevant to him. I think this is education's problem - to broaden a person's horizon - so that eventually Hobbes will be relevant to the ghetto man because Hobbes, it seems to me, to a ghetto person is specifically relevant. Once we have gotten him through another series of extractions to that point. The lady over there mentioned about what happens, or does he go back to the ghetto, etc. And I think this is not the real question but the real question is, "Does our education give the student a choice?" Aren't we always somehow, we have some narrow thing in mind that we want to do; maybe it's our selfish egoism that we want to produce what we are. I didn't come to this conference in the beginning because I was in Washington fighting for more money (and I got it - it was certainly well worth doing.). But in my proposal I used an illustration. Last year we had a brilliant student, a Negro student. He was sharp. But when he came to college he just opted out. And with all our good efforts we couldn't - that is, he couldn't earn our standards of A's, B's and C's, he just earned an F. He just wasn't with it. He was there, ate his food, had his dates, etc. But in my proposal I recited this and I said perhaps we made possible for this student something I'd like to do with many more of them. That they finally, maybe through an act of will, make the determination, "I don't want college." Rather than look at the 30 or 40% we're losing, not because they have taken an act and said, "I don't want it," but just drifted out and I think this is the difference. We've got to solve this whole idea of college education. If the guy decides after a year or two, "This college isn't for me," the essential thing I think he's discovered is; me, I, what do I want? How do I see my life? And me as a person. Good. That fellow is much better off not being in college for his own good.

ELIOT: I'd like to accuse this man of being blatantly dishonest. Not only him but several other people here have done the same thing and really, I wouldn't want to hear you say that before a group of black militant students; you might consider it trouble. I think that one thing that white educators in particular must do when dealing with black people is, do not attempt to pas off a real dangerous issue couched in language that makes it look rather decent. Now this gentleman would give us the impression that this boy at college found out college wasn't really all for him and drifted out. That's not true at all. Your ACE scores put him out; your composition course put him out; You forced him out. He had no alternative. It's the same as the gentleman and the people I was asking yesterday about the black teachers of Florida and the situation there and I said, was it true that the black colleges were closed? And the expression was used, well, they were "phased out;" they were absorbed. But they were never closed. That one syllable word would help a great deal. Here's something I want you to know. I wonder about all the nonsense of phased out and closed and absorbed. I want straight, direct language and this is why - this is basically why, conversation between white administrators and black students breaks down entirely. I have seen kids go into my dean's office, and the dean will get into all these polysyllabic things and he'll go on and on and on and before you know it he's using Latin expressions, what have you, and the kids will stop at one point and say," Listen we don't want to hear this bull shit. All we want to hear is what are you going to do?" You know. The last time it happened in an assembly where three faculty members were viciously attacked verbally for the same thing. They were asked were they going to teach black history, were they going black sociology. Each proceeded to give a long speech, quoting Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence, went into a thing about academic freedom, but they hadn't answered the question yet. You see, now, they can get away with that, with me, because I have been trained to be courteous, you see. Trained. But you're not going to get away with that kind of thing with the younger blacks. They won't let you. I think they're perfectly justified.

LEO: It just proves what I said earlier that . . . . . we're the worst ones being unable

to communicate. With my example, this is specifically I think, not that this particular student drifted out. He made the choice. Given, if this is what college is, forget it. He was just not militant enough to demand something else. The ability we all saw in the ACT scores he was one of us. But he didn't want it and this is why I used this example. I agree with him; I wish he would have fallen harder to get the change made.

GREG: Excuse me you've been waiting to talk.

HARRY: I think we're getting confused about the kids. On the one hand we reject the standards in reading and communications and on the other hand we want to teach them black literature. How can they read black literature if they can't read? We over-simplify. Would you recommend some of the dilutions of standards for the 3 or 4 or 5 year old deprived youngsters who will be growing up to get into college someday. Would you say that he, too, should not be taught to read, communicate in terms of certain standards which will enable him to participate in the cultural heritage of the human race? Not the white race; the human race. In other words I don't polarize his culture for all time to come, both in terms of the 19 year old that you have at the Junior College or the three year old kid who is about to participate of the joys of ghetto life. Where do you begin? Where do you end? Where do you emphasize your program? Certainly you would not say, I don't think you would, I don't think you would . . . . that you take the three year old or the four year old and do the same thing with him and keep him in his polarized, culturally deprived situation for all his lifetime.

ELIOT: No, I'll tell you why. I have a six year old son. It is terribly important to me before he learns anything else, that he learns that he is black and that has certain kinds of implications. That his whole identity is going to be structured by his being black. That is not a choice that he makes. Another thing you're assuming, is that in 16 years things will still be the way they are. I personally - it's just a personal opinion - I don't think, I think it's very likely there won't be a USA in 16 years. But assuming that the country does make it in 16 years, I'd like to think that

we won't be teaching courses in remedial reading, that we won't be teaching courses in correcting writing skills. I'd like to think that by that time we will have adjusted in some means or another to the other media around us. I hate to think that we have 16 more years of this kind of nonsense. If we do, we can just hang it out.

HARRY: Well, I have more confidence in the future of the country. And secondly I think that perhaps in 16 more years it won't be necessary to be teaching so much remedial material because these kids, these 3 and 4 year old kids and your kids, will have been taught better, will learn to read better, to write better, to speak better by the time they get to the Junior College and it won't be necessary to do all of that. I want to see all these kids participate. I don't want them to cop out. I want them to be part of us, to be part of the society and to enjoy all of the fruits of society which includes the cultural things we are ready to reject. I don't really think you can appreciate or understand a writer's technique by watching a film of the book that he wrote. I think you ought to do both. I don't think that one side of the coin is any brighter than the other. I think participation in the whole process of any human being aspired to. Personally, I think that special methods, special approaches are necessary for the rejected group that currently cannot go back to the age of 3 or 4. But I also think that it's over-simplification when you say let's reject everything, the heck with everything and let everybody do his thing. Now what is his thing? I wish someone would tell me. What is his thing? Once you have achieved dignity, then what.

GREG: It's very nice and it's getting very exciting. For some of us it's the first time this program has become relevant. For some of us it's one more jump down the chute. It is 5 minutes after 12 now and it is official breaking time. What I'd like to do is say it's 5 minutes after 12 now and I'd like to give anyone who want to withdraw with honor and withdraw with honor. And I would also like to say this is our meeting room and we can barricade the door and we can stay here if we want to. I am officially declaring this meeting closed and unofficially encouraging it to go on. O.K.

Q: What time?

GREG: We will resume in a workshop at 1:30. However, you should be informed that at

least half of the respondents this morning . . . . I suggest what we do is stay here and chat . . . .

ELLIOT: I'm worried about one thing. The people who are here are concerned or curious . . I'm worried about the people in the other room . . . .There are too many people in that other room. I'd like to take some of them back to Chicago.

[Vote was taken on whether to continue or adjourn until 1:30]

DICK: And I think what we're up to is encouraging . . . .very costly. Logic, yes, teach him logic . . . .[part of sound lost]. . . . . that he still has and that is his dialect if he doesn't want to change. I guess I'm saying let's be more flexible and let's listen to what they want. If they want reading, give it to them, whatever the cost. If they don't, then find out what they do want and give . . . .[sound lost]. . . .something to do with the real world outside.

MAN: I noticed the nitty gritty strategy on this problem which I think some of the others would like to question. You started with that when you said it's important to listen. Now let's take it one step further. Now suppose you and they disagree, then what?

DICK: What we established on our campus is a permanent dialogue, that includes and is broadcast daily. It's a continual conference that never ends, that is broadcast daily over our closed circuit television system, including members of the board of trustees, members of the administration, members of the associated students, members of the black students, members of the brown berets, members of faculty. This is a continual thing; it's going on right now. And we are listening, ---

MAN: Wasn't your president's office bombed last week.

DICK: That's right. I haven't gone into the problem because it's much more complicated than that. If you want to take the time, I'll tell you why the president's office was bombed and it's really not related to exactly what we're talking about here.

MAN: I don't [?] just listening is the answer though.

DICK: No, it's got to be. You've got to come to some kind of agreement but the only way you can . . . .is to have a dialogue and the students themselves after the 11 hours of

faculty meeting came to the faculty and they proposed this dialogue. We didn't - and we agreed to it. But, here's why the president's office was bombed. Three years ago we had a teaching assistant on our campus who is a brown beret and who advocates publically the overthrow of the United States government. He distributed on campus, without permit, anti-Vietnam war literature. The president - (we had a different president then) - threw him off campus and every day the police would come and they would pick Aaron up and all of his brochures and they would take him down to the freeway and they would drop him. And he would trudge back up the hill - our college is on a mountain. For about two hours, he would trudge back up and immediately set up his stand and start distributing the material again. The faculty at that time was behind Aaron and said,"This man has a right to distribute literature here." It went to the court and the courts agreed that he should be allowed to distribute that literature on campus if he distributed it in a booth in a certain place, labeled. But, he broke that restriction and he distributed it elsewhere and so he was jailed. This was considered on the part of many people to be a racist move. Whether it was or not, it was considered to be. He drifted away then from the campus and went to Stanford, and I don't know what he did in the interim. In the meantime, the readiness center was founded and they desperately needed counselors and Aaron volunteered, since he speaks the language of these people, he volunteered to come back as a volunteer counselor. He came back and while he was there he said to the president one day,"If certain changes aren't made around here, there's going to be a takeover of the administration building." And by god the administration building was taken over. And the president then said . . . .Oh! In the meantime the students delivered their 11 demands and one of them was that Aaron Manganello be hired as one of the counselors. They wanted the number of counselors increased; they wanted him hired as one. The administration said flatly, "No. This man threatened us and mentioned an invasion and then it happened and therefore he's dangerous and he cannot be hired." Well, this, of course, polarized the students. We met all of the rest of their demands but we did not meet the demand that Aaron be hired. He is now in court; there's an injunction filed against him; he's fighting it and claiming he has the right to come

on the campus of a public institution as a volunteer because we have them all over the place and to work there. And so he is being tried right at this minute, as far as I know. The militants, the brown berets, however, feel that this is the machinery of the Establishment that is going to simply get rid of him once and for all, that it cannot be trusted and consequently they threw the bomb. So it's not quite related to what we've been talking about here. It does become a political issue, obviously, and there are many things involved.

MAN: I think it is related because as I follow it your faculty disagreed with some of the student's demands and then the bomb was dropped so it would seem the only way to keep the bomb from being thrown is to agree with all their demands.

DICK: No. It becomes involved with this man's personality. It totally revolves around this one man. They made other demands. They demanded other specific people be hired as counselors and we hired them. We have to do it "illegally" in a sense. We have to get around the law because they're not credentialed people, but even the director of the readiness center is not credentialed and we hired him and there are ways of getting around this business of credentialing. But he has become a symbol to them of whether or not there's going to be discrimination on our campus or it is going to be a free campus. And it's not quite that, that we didn't meet one of their demands therefore they're retaliating. It's not quite that because he has become to them - if he is not hired they see their whole cause as simply failing. Now, I have to agree that there are radicals there; there <u>are</u> revolutionaries there. Aaron himself is one of them. And bomb throwing, of course, is one of their techniques. On the other hand, in the Readiness Center they conduct their own classes, they've hired their own faculty to teach certain classes. One of those classes - and this is going to appall you - is guerilla warfare, in which they're taught how to make bombs. Now they say that they are doing this because they know that the white Establishment is just biding it's time until the final solution to the Negro problem can be found and that means to throw them all in camps and they're going to be prepared to fight. And they say," If we go down we're going to bring the whole thing down." And you know I've got to understand their

position. I don't have to condone it and I don't condone it. But, I have to understand it if I'm going to work with these people. So they are doing things like this. Terrible things. They bring guns on campus. They don't have to listen to George Murray at San Francisco State who tells the black students to bring guns on campus; they bring them already.

JOE: They can't make napalm as fast as we can make it and have been making it.

DICK: They know that.

JOE: My son asked me a question a couple of weeks ago. He said," How many people were killed during World War I?" I didn't know, so I went down to the library and looked under World War I and saw World War I, financial cost of, World War I, etc. Nothing World War I, Human tragedy. So I looked around here and an encyclopedia there and I got approximate figures on World War I, World War II. The total was two hundred million people killed or maimed by white folks. You know in this bloodiest of all centuries where there is a relevant activity up there, where trucks going through white counties carrying napalm to country villages in Vietnam . . . .and while white folks sitting there with a cocktail in suburbia worrying about Molotov cocktails and ghetto. I hear the term disadvantaged, culturally disadvantaged. How advantaged ~~does~~ is civilization that in the course of 50 years has killed or maimed two hundred million people, the population of the state of California, about 10 or 15 times over?

I was on the bus last night going back to the hotel and there was a culturally disadvantaged person sitting next to me. A nice gentleman, old man who saw this book on my lap, English in the Two Year College. And he said," Hey, is that the King's English?" And I said, "What is that?" "You know, the way they speak in England. You know, the right way." "They speak a lot of different ways over there." He said, "Like in the King James Bible." And I thought about this and I think he's not so removed from me as an English teacher with my reverence for the printed page. The Holy of Holies. Many of us are acting as if the telephone had never been invented, that the radio had never been invented, that T.V. had never been invented, the movies had never been invented. That we could all go home and die, all of us English teachers, and language differentiation

would cease to accellerate. In fact, the process difference would be if we go home and die and dialect differences would diminish even without us. But we're hell bent on this emphasis with making everybody speak exactly alike, when it's happening even without us. I'm thinking if a student wants to learn my dialect, I'll be willing to teach him and I'm interested in methods to find how this is done with kids who are prepared and want to learn my dialect. I don't particularly want to learn the language of the ghetto. If they want to learn mine, okay, I'm there to help them. These are some of my thoughts. But I think the black kids are saying, and in a different way they're saying the same thing the white kids are saying. That the values of the teachers are wrong and you don't measure a man by whether he says "we was" or "we were." We don't measure a man by whether he wears a beard or not. You don't measure a man by whether he says "sexual intercourse" or "thoughts." You don't measure a man by what he says, by etiquette. You measure him by what he does. Does he give joy to others? Is he capable of giving joy to himself? And I think maybe what's required of a number of English teachers is to develop a little humility about what we're doing. Reading support, writing support. It's not the whole world, and after all, we're living in the most literate American society that we have ever had. The problem might not be so much that kids can't read or write. The problem might be that they can read and write and they do believe the nonsense put out by Dale Carnegie, and Bill Boyd and the LBJ speeches and English teachers. They listen to them and they believe. They read and they believe. Maybe that's the problem and we're addressing ourselves to the wrong problem.

WOMAN: May I make a comment on that very eloquent thing. I was next door among the "disadvantaged" this morning. And I was simply appalled at what was going on there. They were discussing among other things this perfectly hideous crime of shoplifting as if it were the most heinous thing that could ever happen. And in view of what you just said, "That's what's wrong." I almost threw up on the carpet. I had to get out of there because this is absolute nonsense. How a society can condemn a kid for shoplifting that steals constantly but as long as it's in big numbers and by big people this is perfectly O.K. This is absolute nonsense.

GREG: If you had thrown up on the carpet you would have been eligible for 16 dollars per diem, as consultant, as contributor to the . . . .

MARTIN: Yes. There seem to be two issues that need to be dealt with. One: Was the bomb that was thrown, well made?

DICK: Yes, it was ingenious, it was homemade. No one was hurt; it was done at a time when there would be no one there. There were two bombs, one in the president's office and one in the dean of instruction's. And there was respect for the higher heirarchy. The one in the president's office was filled with bullets but the one in the dean's office was only filled with buckshot.

MARTIN: The other question has to do with something that came up before which is that there is a very great freedom available to someone who is liberal, at present. Much greater than to a person who is limited to what he gets on television. He's controlled precisely by the thing that we're up against. Also the fact that it's one way, as is radio, as is largely film at present. It's one way communication from the top down. And if we have responsibility, the chief advantage of something like a telephone, the chief advantage of my being able to operate a typewriter, is that I can get some kind of horizontal communication going on between us. This sort of thing has to be dealt with a number of levels. If I'm going to deal with everyday organization, talking, the telephone is great and face to face conversation is much better than memos . . . There's another thing which has to do with my own culture and my own identity and if it were possible for me to create a sound through film and hope that the whole world - visual communication, a graphic communication which I should have access to. The printed word is not the only way of establishing identity and of communicating with that to someone else. As a matter of fact, there are many advantages to speaking with someone because I'm not merely a humanities person . . . . The image is much more of a fact and communicates much more directly and better and honestly than some words which have been translated successfully several times for which we have to learn all kinds of things to go with. These are two things: one is, can this student? (And I have every confidence that they can, through the experimental colleges and through the

film things . . . . We have to make it available to them to do what they need to do. I can do that for them.) And the other is that there are certain things which we can't give them, which need not rely on this one dimensional consideration of this . . . . just the printed word.

GREG: I've been quiet for a long time. I think I have to get to talk too. I've promised some of you the other day, I guess in group B, who we were listening to Elliott giving us black lit presentation, to recount an experience I had with the black student who was kind enough to take me to the ghetto and I hope that the point of the story will be is that we can see some common ground between what Mr. Shefter said and with what I agree with and what Dick Williamson and Elliott are saying, which I also agree with.

I'm not black and I'm not from the ghetto, my school is supposed to serve it, but it's kind of a token thing and the programs that are set up for the student from downtown are aimed at producing Sidney Poitier. The lady who counsels for that group is black. She's from the ghetto, she had a doctor's degree and she's lots whiter than most of us here; certainly whiter than I am. She has addressed herself quite earnestly, several times in faculty meetings, about the necessity of students removing their hats in the hallway because that was one of the things that was expected of well brought up people. Now these cats wear their hats that they paid forty bucks for and they live in that hat and that's them. And it makes my stomach kind of crawl because this is announced policy and the president seems to be behind it and the board member, who is black, is earnestly dedicated to having students have their hats off in the building and when you pass them they snatch it off. Jesus! I feel like throwing a nickel in it, you know, it's dreadful, just dreadful!

That's not the story, the story is that I talked to this guy and because I came to St. Louis to see what was going on and said,"Why don't you take me ghetto hopping with you sometime?" And I asked a lot of guys to do that and it's very embarrasing, of course, because he wouldn't ask me to take him country club hopping and he thought I didn't have very much dignity or sense to ask him such an inappropriate request. I don't

belong to the country club so I couldn't take him, maybe to M.U.A. (he would have been a very amused observer), and I was appalled. And anyway it finally came to pass. He called me about 5 o'clock one afternoon, 4:30, 3:00, and said,"Hey, you want to come along?" It had taken about a year and a half to decide that I was all right and that was okay too. I said, "Yeah." And I said, "Excuse me for asking but you know I don't want to do the wrong thing but, what ought I to wear." And he said, "Yeah. Why don't you put on a pair of jeans and shirt and hop on down and I'll meet you in such and such a place." So I did. I had a plaid cotton shirt on and all the cats we ran across that day had very Italian knit shirts on. I didn't pass too well. I didn't pass too well anyway.

We went to the high rise apartment house which houses, in St. Louis, 9000 people - almost all black - downtown. They erected that thing over the squalid ruins of places with rats as big as cats, which makes my stomach crawl, but what's worse is that you have to have programs to explain to people that they really shouldn't tolerate rats in their building because it's not a normal way of life. We walked through the corridors of the apartment house where the walls are so narrow in the hallway that you cannot walk two abreast, I don't know whether that was by design or intention or accident or economy, whatever, Anyway we walked slightly behind each other, to call on some people who lived there. The ceiling was just under 7 feet; it accommodated us as we moved through it. The walls were painted cement block because it's very inexpensive. It reminded me as much of anything of an old artillery emplacement in the northwest which guards the Columbia River and was built in World War I and is a tourist attraction there. It had the same kind of feeling. There wernn't any lights in the ~~battery~~ but there were some, not many because some of them were knocked out. There was heavy iron grill on some of the windows and others were just sheet metal iron with holes drilled in. You couldn't see out the window unless you put your eye up to the peep hole and it was because someone had jumped or was thrown out a window in that building or some other and all the windows in the hallways were covered.

We went up in an elevator which had had tile on the floor at one time or other, those

little octagonal tiles. They were pried up, for what reason I don't know. There was a little edge of tile left. The rest of it was board; it was kind of rotten. This is a development that was built 2 or 3 years ago; a big urban development, a multi-million dollar development. Knock on a metal lined door and the lady peeps through the key-hole at us to see who is out there before she opens the door. That is a nice place to go. I had never been there before. After we'd made our visit and we'd seen several places and the guy said, "Say, you like basketball?." I said, "Yeah, I like basketball." He says, "You play?" I said, "Well, I did." I went to a very small grade school one time and because I was the tallest kid in the grade school and the principal, who also did the registering, told me I was turning out for basketball and I made the first team and I had finished the season with 4 points. He plays basketball; he plays it on a grade school lot that's black topped; that's where the black kids go to grade school. Around that grade school is a 9 foot chain link fence. There was no barbed wire on it but I thought it kind of felt like there ought to have been. The windows in the grade school were that same chain link screening up to the third floor; apparently they didn't feel it was necessary on the fourth. The guys who were playing basketball were all black, because this is where we were, but I'm sure it happens to other colors in other parts of the city. The guys were 18 to 30 (who were playing) and there were probably 8 or 10 guys playing basketball and there must of been 30 guys watching the game who didn't play. There was one guy there 55, who was an old coach, and another guy who was 40 was just watching. It was 4:30 in the afternoon or 5 o'clock and the sun was starting to go down and it was another nothing day. The guys had come there to work out, to work it out; it was a tough game. I was awfully glad I hadn't volunteered to play. There was a lot of . . . .(if you check a guy, you really check him.)

What was (dare I say interesting?) about it was that there was also some little kids on the playground, 8 to 14 probably, were standing up against the wire fence, as if someone had tied them up there but they weren't tied and they weren't standing together and they weren't talking, they weren't playing, they weren't having games; they were

standing there. They were about 300 feet away from us and there were dots of them around the fence. They were holding the fence up or the fence was holding them up, there they were. I caused a great sensation by walking in. I was very uneasy, believe me. I made a sincere act of contrition before I went, Sister, but I knew I was out of bounds. And while I been asked by a guy who was with them and I obviously wasn't with them and I wasn't asked and there by God I was. And bang the conversation just stopped when I walked through. He went to play basketball and there I sat, surrounded by 30 guys. I really was like a beacon; I was all whitey. I know how Elliott feels in this room and there you are. Here we are. You know we're not going to knife you, or at least you suppose so, but I wasn't sure at all and one of the games that was going on in addition to the basketball game was a guy with a great big switchblade that was double edged and pointed and finely honed. And his gang was sticking it in the thorax of his friends and cranking up their nice Italian shirts around the tip of it. I noticed that although he was having a good time at it, the guy who was getting stuck was not laughing much. And while a couple of guys around were making kind of nervous jokes, none of them were really getting the hilarity of it that the guy getting the knife had. I was hoping he wasn't going to come and do that to me. Actually I scared him because one guy worked up his courage and came over and asked me for a match and that was a big joke. He went back and he went, "Ha, ha." And they enjoyed it very much. Now, Mr. Shefter, the point of the conversation is that what I heard in terms of syntax and vocabulary at that party (and I hope you'll excuse me for telling you exactly what I heard because I think it's important for you to know) you know what I'm going to say. There were essentially two vocabulary items. One was "Co so" and the other was "Mo foah." O.K. that was it. We've heard the worst part of it, I'm going to say it some more. The Constructs were the imperative made: shouting to the guys on the basketball court, "Sho mo foah" and if he doesn't shoot, "Mo foah" and if he makes it, "Mo foah." It covered the whole range of human emotions.

I heard one more complex structure when the guy 55 was really badly fouled under the basket, something happened to his eyes and he had to quit. And hold his eyes; he was

hunched up and wandering around and really in terrible pain . . . .this was a great thing to the watchers; they seemed to enjoy it very much and laugh. And one guy put in an if - then clause, "If you fo yoah moah you'll feel better, man." Now I think the point I'm trying to draw together is that I'm lucky to have been there and you're not lucky to have not been there. You really ought to go and I told my friends on faculty when I got back where I went and they said, "Oh my God! You went down there. Oh, don't ever go down there again." I said, "Well, I might." The point is that if I get that guy in my class and start hitting him over the head because he has a four word vocabulary or saying to him, "look you ought to read" before we've talked about some other things in a kind of more general way leading up to that, he's not going to see me as anything . . . .

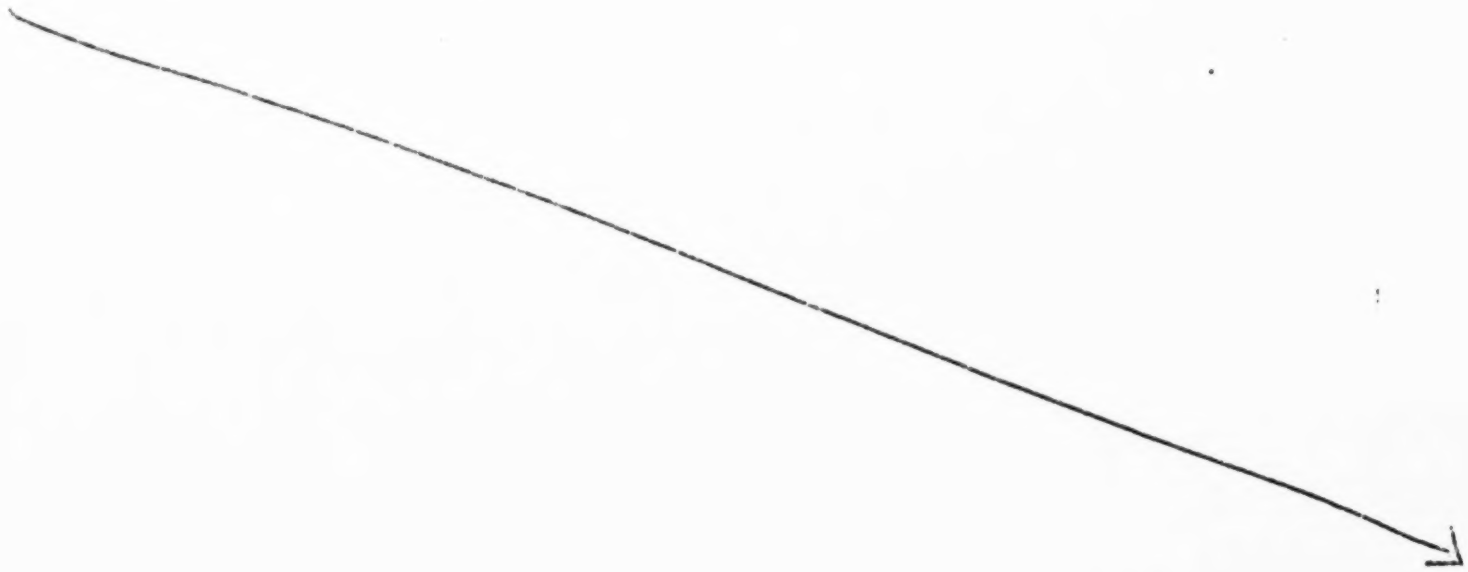
[break]

ELLIOTT: . . . .talking to a black audience was not attempt to get their dialect

HARRY: . . . .one dialect to communicate...

ELLIOTT: No you said the kids want to <u>reject</u> that dialect and that is not true if you're not black and they're putting you on.

HARRY: This dialect to them is not a mark of prestige, as Mr. Williamson said. No. What I said was they don't consider it a mark of prestige . They want to grow above and beyond it, as Stokely Carmichael did, and as Malcolm X .



ELLIOT: Talking to a black audience was not an attempt to use the prestige , neither Malcolm or Stokeley.

HARRY: That's different from what I said altogether.

ELLIOT: No, you said...

HARRY: You must have one dialect to communicate.

ELLIOT: Yeah. But you said the kids wanted to reject that dialect and that is not true. If you had black kids telling you that unless they're really innocent, they're putting you on.

HARRY: I didn't say they wanted to reject it. I didn't say that either. You don't listen. I said that this dialect to them is <u>not</u> a mark of prestige, as Mr. Williamson said, they don't consider it a mark of prestige. They want to grow above and beyond it, as Stokley Carmichael did and as Malcom X and as anyone of the people you mentioned.

DICK: I don't think Malcom X wrote about it. His book is written in the prestige dialect partially, but that was written by somebody else. It was written by Whitney for him.

HARRY: Malcom X was a very literate man.

DICK: I agree.

HARRY: I knew him personally.

DICK: He taught himself in jail.

HARRY: And he certainly didn't qualify. . .

DICK: But that's because he <u>wanted</u> to learn to read. And you know how he taught himself to read? He copied the dictionary while he was in jail, word for word.

HARRY: Well, that's great. That's fine, isn't it?

DICK: But you cannot impose upon a student, "this is what you must learn." He's not going to accept it; He's got to want it.

HARRY: Did you read Fader's <u>Hooked on Books</u>?

DICK: No.

HARRY: Well, you ought to. Here are kids who had a thrust, and impulse for cultural uplift, in a more than a deprived environment, and institutional environment. These kids, semi-literate and reading <u>Scarlet Letter</u> for one reason or another, and what?

DICK: What? You tell us. You read the book.

HARRY: Because they wanted to participate in these things I'm talking about. And they . . .

DICK: You're right when you say the trouble is we're talking in generalities, because we're never going to come to any conclusions. We're over-simplifying and generalizing.

HARRY: You're right. On all the levels on which this must be attacked.

WOMAN: What happens to the student? What do they want? Now they don't like society as we have it but as I talk to students both black and white, they do want a job, they do want to make a great deal of money to provide the things that we have that they don't really like, so they say. Now, what happens? If we accept their dialect and we do whatever we can and that the student wants to make money and he goes into the business world to apply for a job and the boss says, "I'm sorry, your dialect isn't going to get you any place above the basement floor." Now, have we done that student a servitude? What do we do? What do they want? The fact, I see here, that it's money they want to make. Now, you can get to them sometimes, okay. If you want a job where you are going to make money, okay then this is the way it's done. But if you want a job, where you can make money, this is what that employer expects. Now if you don't want to learn this method, okay, fine. But that is the decision the student has to make. But where do we go with him?

MAN: We don't want him, for one. We set up a test which we make up. We frame our definition of what an advantaged person is, what a literate person is, and what standard English is and we set up tests which he's sure to flunk. And we give him a course which he considers inferior. I was watching those films out there. I noticed that one kid who responded to this program favorably, spoke the prestige dialect already and I understood the other two kids who didn't speak the prestige dialect. They conveyed the idea that they were dumped into a garbage can. They wanted the tough stuff, the good stuff. They wanted the good courses. They wanted something to sink their teeth into.

WOMAN: I don't think that answers my question. That student has an application form

and on it, it says sex and the student writes "Yes" and the employer says, "I'm sorry, that won't do." Now what do we do when a student can't fill out the application form to get the position where he can write if he wants to?

MARTIN: In one respect a lot of these students are a lot more realistic than a lot of my friends were. That is, they're not hung up on the abstractions to the extent that they do not want . . . .They want the goods. Which is a different thing and we should not be totally committed to a money economy which defies the big companies, corporations, as being the way that the things are run.

WOMAN: I'm sorry, I think that's the way it is. Maybe it shouldn't be, but I think that's the way they see it . . . .

MAN: For example, you gave me an application and it said, "Male or Female" and there's a court case going on now that may lead to the elimination of that on an application form. And this is the kind of thing which is nonsense to distinguish on the basis of color, on the basis of sex . . . .

WOMAN: I think that's fine, but I understand right now business and industry and the society. If they want the things that money will buy. But if they do, is business willing to go along with this also?

GREG: Well, no, in some places there are I think . . .I think Rochester changed its mind, after it got burned a little bit, and I think it can happen. I know exactly what you mean, though. I have two dentists who I am very fond of, that I went to high school and college with. They're pulling down 40 thousand bucks each and running two offices as tax deductions, and things like that, who said, "Yes, we would hire a good colored, if we could find one. But they all talk so funny that we won't hire them." That's still prevalent, and you're right to say okay, what's our obligation to get our people past that? Miss?

WOMAN: I'm a new American. I chose to come to this country. I could get the job that I got, although being handicapped in this country of being black, because of the education I have had, some of it gained in this country, some of it gained in England, and my native home of Jamica. I am confused, I know . . . and I have been educated.

I know that is why I have the mobility and is because of my education. This is why I have it, and I am very grateful to my parents for it. I don't want to deny my fellow blacks from this kind of mobility that I've had. I have been in many places in the world and I had success because of my education. And really, what you're saying, many of you, is so good and very helpful. I continue to learn. In Jamica we have a dialect too, and the people that have the mobility are the people who have other levels. I can speak perfectly well in the dialect and I can resort to it when I have to. I have relatives who speak in the dialect. They do not have the mobility that I have had. So we can speak in beautiful terms and we have to, in order to rid ourselves of some attitudes. Many of you have deeply ingrained attitudes in which you were forced and you know how to speak yourselves out of it. But you really have to think of reality in the Western world, not just America. There are certain values. Africa is accepting them. Jamica has accepted them with our own modifications which, you know, you cannot deny these people who want to get this mobility. I don't know how they're going to get it. There were ....of persons, too. That's important. And that's part of what you're talking about, to be free. But really essential is to help them to be mobile.

MAN: Dick, earlier you said that people from the ghetto want to go back to the ghetto and not change and to stay this way.

DICK: No, that isn't quite what I said.

MAN: Well maybe . . . have a different way of life. This fellow over here said a minute ago they didn't want the money; they're not interested in money, they're interested in goods. What I'd like to know, from him, how you get goods without money, unless you steal them, and from you, what different way of life do they want?

I'm kind of dissatisfied with my way of life, too, because it's such a hectic rat race and even though my income is pretty good I'm poor. But I'm mobile. I flew here. I'll fly to Disneyland at Christmas time a month from now. I'm not real poor. But what do you mean by a different way of life? . . . . .What is it? WASP? White Anglo Saxon Protestant, that I am. They don't want that. What do they want?

DICK: They don't want the despair of knowing that society considers them failures and

that no matter what they do, it will be a badge of inferiority. That is, they don't want to be simply domestics. Because this is simply saying to the world "I am a failure."

MAN: But how are you going to be something else without an education?

DICK: But who's arguing against education? My words are being twisted. I'm in favor of education. I'm asking for greater education.

MAN: What kind of education? Give me an alternative. Let them stay in their dialect where Greg says they say "mo foh" and that's all? Is this enough?

LEO: I don't think that's really going to be a problem. If the fellow wants an education it's part of his . . . his vocabulary. Let's use vocabulary rather than dialect. He can have his vocabulary and keep the same dialect.

GREG: Elliott you wanted to say something.

ELLIOTT: Yes, there are a couple of things I want to say in response to a number of people. For those students, black and white, who are involved in the quest for the American dream of mobility, I have not advocated nor do I think anyone in this room has advocated that they should be denied. But there are another large body of students who really don't give a damn about your American dream. My wife can verify this. The president of our student senate ate dinner at my house about 2 weeks ago. And we were talking about the crises on our campus, and he said, "You know, if they don't do what I want them to do about making curriculum more relevant to black people, this school is going to burn down if I have to do it myself. You know, I dropped 8 of my 15 hours. I'm down to 7 hours. I may not get through college. I don't give a damn about that any more. What I care about is what's going to happen to my little girl." He has a little girl four years old. And someone said to him - we had a mixed couple - who live in the same building at our place, at dinner - said to him, "Well, if you don't go to college and you don't get this education, you won't be able to eat. You won't be able to get a job." I'll never forget what that kid said. He turned around and he said, "As long as there are National food stores, as long as there are A&P's, I'm going to eat whether I have money or not. He said . . . . And this is amazing. This is a firm attitude among many white and black students. They do not accept the legitimacy of this system . . . and they will tell you, "O.K.,

if you're going to deny me the right to maintain an occupation because of my features and certain dialect, . . . I won't get a job. I will wait until you go from your store at 6 o'clock in the evening and I will bomb it and I will take what I need for my family to eat and then after you send your cops out you wait until the next day and we'll do it again. You can't guard all the A&P's in the country. That would be a complete waste of police force. Your send your cops out, and the next day we'll do it again. This is very prevalent among many young northern blacks and I've heard also of whites. In graduate school in the University of Chicago, it's much the same thing. But then another kind of hypocrisy that I don't like and it's going on in this room and in this conference. And that is we sit here for three days, and by the time there'll be three more days that are past, talking about the dialect of teachers of the black students. We have in this conference delegates from Alabama, Mississippi, Florida and Georgia, all of whom, if I wouldn't look at them face to face, I would think that they were black because they have the same dialect. Teachers! We don't penalize them, though.

The president, ~~of~~ the chairman of the English department at the University of Chicago has such a strong . . . he's from Mississippi . . . has such a strong dialect, that if you are not at all aware of such a dialect, you wouldn't understand what he was saying. Yet, if this man were black, not only couldn't he <u>be</u> the chairman of the department at Chicago, he could not have been hired by the Chicago staff.

I think that where you made your mistake in this language thing, I think you use this whole language thing as a kind of racist tool to keep black people off the staff. I think you'll be sorry about it. Where you're making your mistake is that you're saying that the black person survives, that if the black person prevails in any sense, he must not be as good as you, but <u>better</u>, and these kids are not buying it. I really don't blame them.

JOE: The crime that you mentioned, going into the supermarket and taking something. We have bad names for it, like burglary, thievery, and this kind of thing. For our own crime we have other names; embezzlement. And the middle class crimes, when we take something that doesn't belong to us that's embezzlement. To the ghetto kid its "stop thief" and shoot back and he gets one year and the embezzler gets, how long? That is our language.

No, the English teachers aren't aware of this. They aren't aware of the prejudice involved in the definitions, in the terms we have formulated for crimes. I will give you an example of this. It's just in recent years I've been trying to get out of the racist bag I was in. I picked up a....it comes from New York....it was over in the West Side of New York in a used book store and I saw a reader that I used in parochial schools back in Brooklyn. And I remembered some of the stories in it, I especially remembered a picture of a white bird flying jauntly in the heavens, and I said "Gee, I remember that story about how the crow got to be black". And there was a picture in the beginning of the story of a beautiful white bird joyfully soaring through the heavens and the bird did wrong and a picture at the end of the story this sorrowful looking bird no longer soaring joyfully. I wondered how much influence, you know unconsciously, that kind of stuff had on me. I started looking at the some of the boys' books I used to read, such as Baseball Joe and the Rover Boys. And it's all in there. The whole racist bag. And it's in our American literature courses. I was talking to a lady over there and I wasn't aware of it until early last summer. I taught an Early American Lit. course using standard texts, you know, any one of them, they are all the same--Blair, Volume I, Literature of the United States to 1865. At the suggestion of one of my colleagues, I asked the classes as a project to look into the question of whether there was a literature in the United States prior to 1865, a literature written by so-called "minority group" authors. Stretch it 1900, if you wish. Choose the branch library in the county. Use the Berkeley library if you want. Second question: is such a literature, if it exists, available in the local libraries? Third question, which a committee did: if there is such a literature, if books are in print, let's order them for our own library. They did a splendid job. The class prepared and typed up with a beautiful cover, a 30-page bibliography of the literature of minority group authors prior to 1865. It wasn't in the textbook. And a lot of it I hadn't even understood myself. It was no worse, and in some cases, much better than the literature of the conquering class that we have mistaken for great 18th Century poetry. Phyllis Wheatley, for example, probably

the most well-known author and poet, most well-known abroad, from 1870 to 73 has been excluded from texts up until very recently. Now she bores the hell out of me; but so does Michael Wigglesworth and Ann Bradstreet and many of the others that have been included in the textbook for years. I think she's at least as good as Phillip Freneau. But she hasn't been in there. Incidentally, minority groups turned out to be sections on Methodists, Catholics, Mormons, Chinese-Americans. Two of my students went down to Chinatown, San Francisco, to the Chinese branch library and ran into an old Chinese, who, it turned out, had probably the best collection in the country. He brought them to his house. He had, you know, Chinese-American literature, a good deal of it in English. Anyway, I learned a good deal just teaching this course that I hadn't learned in the Great American Civilization Programs that I'd taken at NYU, or the University of Wisconsin.

GREG ... It is 1:15. Do you want to circulate for a closing observation? Don, you've been very quiet. Do you want to throw something in?

DON ... No, I don't think so.

GREG ... George?

GEORGE ... No, it's too difficu't for me.

GREG ... O. K.

MANI ... Mine's much too long. Ann started the idea and I have been thinking about it from a while ago. The question is this: What are these people looking for the United States of America to be, if we're going to be here then, 50 years from now. What do they wish to make it into? Or, are they looking that far?

GREG ... Let's not answer that.

DICK: ... I think they have the "ghetto reaction" that you want things right now, and you don't worry about the future.

GREG ... Sir? Oh. Can I just go around and point at people? I'm sorry I don't know names.

LEO ... I'm still concerned that we don't __?__ the two questions. I have not read all the news reports which would be slanted anyway, but when a college student group

has to make a demand, that's a signal that it's gone too far. What they ask black literature courses, is not delusion. Rather, they're asking for more. Now, I want to be private for just a little while because the national press has distorted the Atlanta University Center a few weeks ago. Spellman College students were allegedly demanding with threats of violence that certain things be changed. There were threats. There was an underhanded methodology. But again, it can be specifically blamed on an administration not listening. We are right across the street. Our students didn't have to make demands. They wrote a letter; there was an administrative hierarchy; it went to the proper committee which dealt with it and we did what they wanted us to. In fact, in some cases, some of the faculty said, "Gee, I wish you would have asked for more." But this is one part of it. Administrators--and we are essentially, too, administrators, whether you want to say we are teachers or not. As soon as you have someone making a demand, you didn't act soon enough. You weren't tuned-in. That another cliche. These other problems-they're good, hard, and real and must be handled. I think we can use our student who want stronger curriculum and a live, reaching curriculum to help the head-start, be 19 instead of 9.

GREG ... O. K. Sister?

SISTER ... Well, I think nobody expects us to by the time we reach this point, and everyone has reached this point within the last year or so on many levels and in many situations. I find myself questioning what is education and what is my role as an educator. If we're not listening to these kids, we're not doing anything, we're not working with them.

GREG: ... Good. Excuse me just a second. Go ahead, Sydney.

WOMAN... Well, I just think it's an extremely complex problem like the Sister and I've questioned many times just where do I belong in this whole hierarchy of social education as a teacher, cab-driver, whatever. But I think it reminds me a good deal of the introduction I had, It took about a year for it to really settle in. The initial thing I got was that I had to change my way of thinking, of my approach to language. I think this may come here. At least we can think differently, and look at things differently. If I can gain this, then I think this may help. Now what I'll do I'm not sure.

It may take another year.

GREG ... Good. Thank you. Can we keep these short because we're hungry and we want to get going. Martin.

MARTIN ... What I want to say is that there is time to spare. The world was here before, and the dominance of the solitary person reading the book was real, and it will go on.

GREG ... Good. Mr. Schester? Patsy?

PATSY ... Well, the only thing that I'm aware of is that at times I seem to be speaking out of books, because sometimes when questions are raised, I feel like saying, "because that's the way the world is, stupid, and we all have to learn it the hard way." And other times I ought be saying, "This is the way it might be". I think it's a very uncomfortable position and must be solved.

GREG ... O. K. In the back row?

MANZ... I'd like to say thanks. I'm glad I was here.

GREG ... Good. That's nice to hear.

WOMAN ... I'd like to say this was the first convention I've attended. Quite often you can't escape the fact that you are discussing this and it does show a great concern. I agree with you that things are going to be different, and it may not take as long as 16 years. I think you're going to find some differences. Also, I'm kind of in a unique situation. I'm in a completely white junior college and they chose to send me. I only wish that more of <u>them</u> had come.

GREG ... Very good. O. K. On the other side.

ELLIOT ... I'd like to say perhaps, clear-out, because it doesn't seem that you and I disagree all that much. You just asked me if I advocated the boy taking the materials from the A&P. No. When I describe acts of violence or acts of social protest, I'm not saying that I necessarily advocate or condone them. What I'm trying to point out to you is that when you cease to be responsive to the needs of these students, then they see this as the only alternative, the same as the gentleman over here pointed out and I point out the other day that by the time things get around to demand, then you've

come that far. I'd like to go a little bit further, and first of all, congratulate you, Greg. This is not my first conference, I've been to many of them. I've usually been bored to death. I've usually gone to these conferences in the capacity of a token Negro to show that NCTE is still integrated. We usually sat around discussing verbs. When we come to the point that we begin to discuss the things that really are relevant, perhaps to the continued existence of the community college, to me is terribly important and it makes me look forward excitedly to the next convention. I remember a time I didn't do that. I just didn't want to go at all.

GREG... Thank you. O. K. Mary?

MARY ... I'll pass.

GREG ... O. K. Loretta?

LORETTA ... I thought about what you were saying about the projects and I know some of you wonder why the projects are so condemned or torn-up as they are. Like you said, I used to live in projects and these projects are like prisons. They are 15 stories high, 7 stories high. Personally, I didn't like them. Now my mother kept it up and everything, when I was living with my mother. But some people, like younger people, tear them up because they resent being in these places. Well, that's about all.

GREG... Thank you.

WOMAN ... Well, let us start learning and continue learning to love.

GREG ... That's nice. Joe? You're staying on love. O. K.

WOMAN ... I would just like to say that I can probably view all this somewhat more objectively when one of the best students I ever had gets out of jail a year from now and can return to Whitewater from which he was suspended for inciting a riot.